



## News Release

For Immediate Release

### **New marine protected area for Nova Scotia closer to becoming a reality**

**Halifax, Nova Scotia: October 9, 2009**) The Government of Canada took a step toward its commitment to protecting Canada's oceans by announcing three areas of interest (AOIs) as candidates for the establishment of Nova Scotia's next marine protected area (MPA). These candidates are all offshore areas off the coast of Nova Scotia: Middle Bank, St. Anns Bank, and Misaine Bank and the Eastern Shoal.

At the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development, Canada committed to creating a national network of marine protected areas by 2012, but we are lagging behind on this target. In the Scotian shelf and Bay of Fundy region, our three existing protected areas add up to only **one half of one per cent** of the marine environment, and protect only a fraction of the Region's habitat types.

"We congratulate DFO on this important step to help our oceans recover," says Dr. Robert Rangeley, Vice-President Atlantic for WWF-Canada. "Nova Scotia has made great progress in protecting significant areas on land, and now we are taking some much needed steps to protect important species and habitats in the ocean."

MPAs are areas of the ocean designed to protect biodiversity. The benefits of marine protected areas include: more plants and animals per cubic metre of ocean, a wider range of species, and larger fish that produce more young – which could lead to a rebound of overfished stocks and mean long-term profits for fishing communities.

WWF-Canada, the Ecology Action Centre (EAC) and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) have been advocating for a well-planned network of MPAs that protects ecologically significant areas and streamlines rules for resource users while boosting opportunities for eco-tourism. Protected area networks are recognized by scientists as the most important tool for helping ecosystems cope with climate change impacts on our oceans.

"We are really pleased to see the process of choosing a new off-shore marine protected area go forward," says Shannon Arnold, Marine Coordinator for Halifax's Ecology Action Centre. "Ocean management is a true test of collaboration - trying to balance sustainable economic development with conservation. Kudos to the new provincial government for working with DFO to clear some long-standing stumbling blocks and getting back on track to fulfilling Canada's commitments to ocean planning."

The next step in the selection process will involve a 60-day public consultation period, which began on September 30<sup>th</sup>, according to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), with the new AOI being selected in early 2010.

"MPAs create safe places in the ocean where areas are legally protected from harmful activities to allow for recovery of species and habitats which improves the overall health of the ocean," says Ashley Sprague, Marine Coordinator for CPAWS-NS. "Healthy oceans are important to all Nova Scotians, so this is your chance to have a say in the future of Nova Scotia's oceans and we strongly encourage the public to get involved in the upcoming consultation process."

More information about the issue can be found by visiting [www.wwf.ca/oceansaction](http://www.wwf.ca/oceansaction), and by joining the Facebook Group: "Oceans Action for the Scotian Shelf and Bay of Fundy".

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#### **Additional Resources:**

MPA Brochure: [http://assets.wwfca.bluegecko.net/downloads/wwf\\_oceans\\_action\\_brochure.pdf](http://assets.wwfca.bluegecko.net/downloads/wwf_oceans_action_brochure.pdf)

Film: <http://endoftheline.com/>

Ocean Conservation Study: [http://assets.wwfca.bluegecko.net/downloads/gap\\_analysis\\_1\\_1.pdf](http://assets.wwfca.bluegecko.net/downloads/gap_analysis_1_1.pdf)

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Seabed Classification Brochure: <http://assets.wwf.ca/downloads/oceanofdiversity.pdf>

**For further information:**

Stacey McCarthy  
Communications Specialist  
WWF-Canada, Atlantic Region  
Tel: 902.482.1105 x 41  
Cell: 902.209.6457  
Email: [smccarthy@wwfcanada.org](mailto:smccarthy@wwfcanada.org)

Ashley Sprague  
Marine Conservation Coordinator  
CPAWS-NS  
Tel: 902.446.4155  
Email: [marine@cpawsns.org](mailto:marine@cpawsns.org)

Robert Rangeley  
Vice President, Atlantic  
WWF-Canada  
Tel: 902.482.1105 x 23  
Cell: 902.401.1569  
Email: [rrangeley@wwfcanada.org](mailto:rrangeley@wwfcanada.org)

Shannon Arnold  
Marine Coordinator  
Ecology Action Centre  
Tel: 902.446.4840  
Email: [sharnold@ecologyaction.ca](mailto:sharnold@ecologyaction.ca)

**About WWF-Canada**

WWF-Canada is part of WWF, the world's largest conservation organization. At WWF we advocate and promote lasting solutions to the challenge of balancing growing human need and environmental sustainability. In collaboration with business, government, communities and individuals we take a science-based approach to the protection, management and restoration of environmentally sensitive parts of our planet. Our work includes visionary projects focused on climate change, freshwater and the health of habitat and species across Canada and around the world. For more information about WWF-Canada visit [wwf.ca](http://wwf.ca).

[wwf.ca/newsroom](http://wwf.ca/newsroom) for latest news and media resources

**About CPAWS-NS**

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) is a national non-profit organization working to ensure that nature comes first in the management of parks and protected areas, that additional protected areas are created, and that land and sea are managed to retain Canada's biodiversity and wilderness. We ground our work in conservation science and we seek consensus for wilderness protection by engaging governments, industry and the Canadian public. For over 15 years, the Nova Scotia Chapter (CPAWS-NS) has been working co-operatively with governments, industry, communities, and other wilderness conservation organizations across the province to protect Nova Scotia's unique terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

**About Ecology Action Centre (EAC)**

The EAC is Nova Scotia's oldest environmental organization. We are a grassroots, community organization that focuses on the most pressing current environmental issues and advocates for environmental protection and sustainable economies through education, research and policy reform.